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U.S. Patent Application

**Package For Toilet Seat Covers**

**Related Application**

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional patent application no. 60/444,852 filed February 4, 2003, the entire disclosure of this application is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

**Technical Field**

[0002] The present invention relates to a package for toilet seat covers that are dispensed from a dispenser, for example, a wall-mounted dispenser.

**Background of the Invention**

[0003] A typical toilet seat cover dispenser is mounted on a wall adjacent a toilet. The dispenser is stocked with preassembled packs of toilet seat covers. The covers are manually dispensed from the pack in the dispenser, one at a time, for use by the user. The pack includes a group of covers that are at least partially enclosed in a package. The package is typically made from cardboard or card stock type material. This material is relatively heavy and can be difficult to work with when assembling the pack. For example, it is often constructed as a flat blank that must be prebroken into the desired three-dimensional shape, then stapled or glued.

### **Summary of the Invention**

[0004] In one embodiment, the invention relates to a pack of toilet seat covers adapted to be received in a dispenser, the pack comprising a group of toilet seat covers and a package for containing the group of covers. The package includes an insert. The package further includes a wrapper for enclosing the insert and the group of covers when the package is assembled. The wrapper is made from a lightweight, flexible material. The wrapper has a window portion that is removable to enable access to the group of covers within the wrapper when the package is received in a dispenser.

### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

[0005] Fig. 1 is a schematic front elevational view of a pack of toilet seat covers including a package constructed in accordance with the a first embodiment of the present invention;

[0006] Fig. 2 is a sectional view of the pack of Fig. 1, shown mounted in a wall-mounted dispenser, taken generally along line 2-2 of Fig. 1; and

[0007] Fig. 3 is an enlarged schematic rear perspective view of a lower corner portion of the package of Fig. 1.

### **Detailed Description of the Invention**

[0008] The present invention relates to a package for toilet seat covers that are dispensed from a dispenser, for example, a wall-mounted dispenser. The present invention is applicable to various cover package constructions. As representative of the present invention, Figs. 1-3 illustrate a package 10 in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention.

[0009] The package 10 is shown in Fig. 2 as part of a pack 12 mounted or contained in a seat cover dispenser 14. The dispenser 14 (shown in dashed lines) is shown mounted on a wall 16. The dispenser 14 has a front wall 18 that includes an opening 20.

[0010] The package 10 (Figs. 1-3) encloses a group, or plurality, of seat covers 22. The package 10, together with the group of seat covers 22, forms the pack 12 that is contained in the dispenser 14. The seat covers 22 are known toilet seat covers that are adapted to cover a toilet seat when dispensed from the dispenser 14. The group of covers 22 when enclosed in the package 10 has a front side 24 and a back side 26.

[0011] The package 10 includes a wrapper 30 and an insert 32. The wrapper 30 encloses the insert 32 and the group of covers 22.

[0012] The insert 32 is made from a relatively stiff material as compared to the wrapper 30. The insert 32 in the illustrated embodiment is made from a single flat piece of cardboard or card stock. The insert could be made from any other rigid or semi-rigid material, such as plastic, for example. The insert 32 has the overall configuration of the group of covers 22. In the illustrated embodiment, the insert 32 (Fig. 1) has a generally rectangular configuration including parallel top and bottom edges 34 and 36 and parallel left and right side edges 38 and 40. Notches or other features could be provided at the top corners of the insert 32 to minimize the chance of tearing of the wrapper 30 when it is assembled over the insert.

[0013] The insert 32 overlies the back side 26 (Fig. 2) of the group of covers 22. The insert 32 provides the package 10 with sufficient stiffness so that the package can be transported and assembled into the dispenser 14 without significant bending. In addition, the insert 32 helps the package 10 to retain its shape in the dispenser 14 until the seat covers 22 are fully dispensed.

Although cardboard or card stock is the desired material for the insert 32, any other material that provides these benefits would suffice, as would a different configuration.

[0014] The wrapper 30 is made from a lightweight plastic material that is relatively flexible compared to the insert 32. In the illustrated embodiment, the wrapper 30 is made from low density polypropylene having a thickness of less than one millimeter. The wrapper 30 could be made from any other suitable material or have another thickness.

[0015] When the package 10 is assembled and unopened as shown in Fig. 1, the wrapper 30 encloses the insert 32 and the group of covers 22. As a result, the group of covers 22 are maintained in a sanitary condition.

[0016] The wrapper 30 is preferably made from a single sheet of material that is wrapped around the group of covers 22 and the insert 32. The wrapper 30 has a front panel 42 (Fig. 2) and a back panel 44. The front panel 42 overlies the front side 24 of the group of covers 22. The back panel 44 of the wrapper 30 overlies the insert 32.

[0017] The wrapper 30 has a first end portion 50 located adjacent the bottom edge 36 of the insert 32. The wrapper 30 extends upward (as viewed in Fig. 2) from the first end portion 50, along the outside of the insert 32, to the top edge 34 of the insert, thus forming the back panel 44.

[0018] The wrapper 30 thence extends downward along the front side 24 of the group of covers 22, to the bottom of the group of covers, thus forming the front panel 42. The wrapper 30 thence wraps upward around the bottom edge 36 of the insert 32 and around the first end portion 50 of the wrapper, forming an outer flap 52. The outer flap 52 extends for only a relatively small distance along the back panel 44 of the wrapper 30, perhaps one to two inches.

[0019] The front panel 42 and the back panel 44 of the wrapper 30 are sealed to each other at left and right seams 54 and 56. The outer flap 52 is sealed at its sides to the seams 54 and 56.

[0020] The front panel 42 of the wrapper 30 includes a window 60. The window 60 is a portion of the front panel 42 that is perforated around its edges for removal from the remainder of the front panel. When the window 60 is removed, an opening 62 (Fig. 2) is formed in the front panel 42 of the wrapper 30. The opening 62 enables access to the group of covers 22 so that one cover can be removed for use. The opening 60 is positioned to align with the opening 20 in the dispenser 14. Optionally, one or more vent openings, such as the die cut openings 64 (Fig. 1), can be provided for venting air from the wrapper 30 as it is being loaded.

[0021] Because the package 10 of the present invention uses a poly wrapper 30 rather than a cardboard wrapper, it is relatively lightweight and easy to handle and assemble. In addition, no stapling or gluing is needed. Also, wrapping the package with the poly wrapper 30 can provide a more sanitary construction.

[0022] Other packaging configurations are contemplated. The unsealed poly wrapper 30 with flap 52 can be replaced with a sealed wrapper if the assembly process is fully automated. In addition, other shapes and sizes of the package can be used. For example the illustrated package is intended for use with half-fold covers; a package with similar features could be used for quarter-fold covers, for example. Such improvements, changes, and modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims.